



Foster Care Manual



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Introduction

Thank you so much for your interest in fostering pets for Bama Bully Rescue. By opening up your home to foster pets, you're not only helping to save lives, you're providing the individual attention and love these dogs desperately need.

Bama Bully Rescue's foster care manual has information on preparing for, bringing home and caring for a foster dog to prepare him or her for a forever home.

Once you have completed your foster application online, our foster coordinator will get in touch with you to sign you up for one of our scheduled orientation and training sessions. In the session, we'll go over this manual and answer any questions you have about the program.



Our bully breed foster program is designed to help puppies and adult dogs from local Alabama shelters get a second chance at finding a home — a chance they may not have received at a shelter. Many of the dogs who need foster homes require extra care and attention, which shelters often don't have the staff or resources to provide. But in a loving foster home, every dog can get the individual attention he or she needs to find a forever family.

Foster homes are asked to provide basic care for the dogs, as well as transportation to and from veterinary appointments as needed, and transportation to the Bama Bully Rescue adoption events so that foster pets can get an opportunity to meet prospective adopters. Care for foster dogs includes feeding according to size and needs, exercise according to energy levels, and lots of play time and positive socialization.

Although fostering is a lot of work, it is a very rewarding experience. By participating in this program, you are saving lives and helping bully breed dogs find the families they've been longing for.

Section 1: Frequently asked questions

Where do the foster dogs come from?

The dogs that are in need of foster care come to us from two main sources:

- **Returned adoptions.** At Bama Bully Rescue, we make a lifetime commitment to every animal we rescue. This means that if, for any reason an adopter can no longer keep a pet he or she adopted from us, we require that the pet comes back to Bama Bully Rescue. If the pet ends up at a shelter, we will pick up the animal and return him or her to foster care, and hopefully another adoptive home.

- **Shelter rescue.** Bama Bully Rescue takes in animals from local shelters throughout Alabama. We want to save as many lives as possible, and foster care is the main reason that we are able to provide rescue services. The basic requirements for admission to our rescue program is that the dog be a bully breed, not have a bite history or be human aggressive, and not be dog aggressive. Dog selectivity with size or sex is acceptable, but full on dog aggressiveness is not. Before a dog can enter the program, it must be temperament tested by a current Bama Bully Rescue board member.

How much time do I need to spend with a foster dog?

As much time as you can. With that said, the amount of time will vary depending on the energy level and needs of the dog you are fostering. It is ideal to spend around two hours a day exercising and interacting with your foster dog to ensure that he or she receives adequate socialization and stimulation.

Can I foster dogs even if I have a full-time job?

Yes. The foster application is designed as a survey to help the foster coordinator match you with the best animal for your needs and your current schedule. If you have a full-time job, the foster coordinator will match you with a dog that may be OK alone during the workday. You would then need to provide ample exercise before or after you go to work.

Can I foster a dog if I don't have a fenced yard?

Yes. Even if you do have a fenced yard, we request that you supervise all outdoor activities with the foster dog. We also ask that you always keep him or her on a leash when you're on walks.

What do foster families need to provide?

Foster families need to provide:



A healthy and safe indoor and outdoor environment for their foster dogs.

Transportation to and from vet appointments and adoption events as needed.

Socialization and cuddle time to help teach dogs positive family and pet relationships

Lots of exercise and positive stimulation to help them develop into great dogs

Basic training, including housebreaking, crate training, and leash walking.

How long will the dog need to be in foster care?

Ideally, foster dogs stay in their assigned foster homes until they get adopted. Bama Bully rescues are kept in foster care for at least two months before being adopted. That allows plenty of time to assess the dog's personality in a home situation, and helps us match the dog to the perfect forever family.

How often does my foster dog need to go to the Bama Bully Rescue adoption events?

Once a foster dog has been cleared medically and behaviorally for adoption, we ask that foster families bring their foster dogs to our adoption events whenever possible. Puppies should have all puppy vaccinations before attending events. If foster families are unable to attend events, other volunteers can help with transport. Adoption events are one of the very best ways to provide exposure to your foster dog, and speeds up adoption so that another pup can be rescued!

Will I need to give medicine to my foster dog?

Almost all of the dogs that we have in our foster program are rescued from shelters and have been exposed to shelter illnesses or were lacking important preventive care, like heartworm prevention, before they came to the shelter. While we do our best to ensure that we are aware of all the conditions that a foster dog may have prior to going home, many illnesses have incubation periods, meaning symptoms can arise after you take a dog home. So, while some dogs do not require any medicine, others may. If your foster dog needs medications, Bama Bully provides them, and can show you how to administer them before you take the animal home.



Can I let my foster dog play with my personal pets?

There are a few guidelines that we ask foster families to adhere to regarding their personal pets. While it is often fine for foster dogs to play with family pets, we advise that you consult with your veterinarian before fostering to ensure that all of your personal pets are healthy and up-to-date on all vaccines. Dogs in shelters are very susceptible to illness and can carry or catch different diseases. If, for any reason, your personal pet becomes ill while you are fostering a Bama Bully Rescue pet, we cannot provide medical care for your personal pet. We ask that you manage resources (toys, food, etc.) carefully and do not leave your foster unsupervised with any other dogs.

What if I want to adopt my foster dog?

If you decide to adopt your foster dog, please contact the foster coordinator right away, so that we can stop accepting applications for adoption. Foster parents always have the ability to adopt their foster dogs, and we love to see “Foster Failures”!

Who will take care of my foster dog if I need to go out of town?

You will need to make your own arrangements for boarding your foster dog if you leave town. In some cases, another foster family will be available to take care of your foster dog while you are away. You may also leave your foster dog with family or friends, but please make them aware of the foster care guidelines (dogs must be kept indoors and away from strange dogs, etc.) Be sure to alert the Foster Coordinator of your plans, and provide her contact information to your pet sitter.

What if my foster dog bites me?

If any of your foster pets bite you and break skin, causing you to bleed, you need to report the bite to the foster coordinator within 24 hours of when the bite occurred. The law requires that we report all bites. The teeth of the animal, not the nails, must have broken the skin. If you are unsure, then please report the bite anyway.

Can I foster a dog to fulfill a community service obligation?

Unfortunately, Bama Bully Rescue cannot sign off on court-ordered community service hours for fostering. Community service is supposed to be supervised work, and fostering is unsupervised, since it takes place in your home.



What if my foster dog is not working out?

You are not required to continue to foster a dog if you feel it's not working out. However, we may not have an immediate alternate foster home for the dog. As mentioned above, we don't have our own overnight boarding facility so we rely on boarding partners. We will work on moving your foster dog out as soon as possible, but we ask for your understanding and patience. Please call the foster coordinator if this situation arises.

Section 2: Preparing for your foster dog

When you take your foster dog home, he may be frightened or unsure about what's happening, so it's important not to overwhelm him. Prepare a special area for the foster dog to help ease his adjustment into a new home environment.

Two Week Shut Down

Bama Bully Rescue requires that all foster families follow the two-week shut-down routine, described in this manual. This is a GREAT method for anyone who brings a new dog into their home. We know from experience that using, or not using this method, can be the difference in whether or not a dog's transition into a new home is a good experience or a bad one. We as foster homes have the added responsibility to find and expose our dog's true personalities. We also have the responsibility of making our foster home a "mud platter", so as not to make the dog's adoptive home seem like less of a home than ours. We cannot make our foster dog a part of our home, give it too much freedom and allow it to become a total part of our world. This can lead to a set up in the new adoptive home of nervous behavior, displays of separation anxiety, barking, whining, and destructive behavior. We want the adoptive home to be that much better than our world in the foster homes.

This area should be large enough for an appropriately sized crate for the dog and should allow the dog access to his food and water dishes and toys when outside of his crate. We request that all foster dogs be housed indoors only. A garage, backyard or outdoor run is not a suitable accommodation for a foster dog.

By following the two week shut down into the foster home, then carrying that over to the adoptive home, the dog falls into a safe and familiar pattern, and each home has allowed the dog time to relax and check out the next new world. Foster dogs come from various places. Some are abused, abandoned, owner surrendered, running loose, etc, and they land in the shelter, which is a stressful environment. From there they rush into a life in our homes, and then once again into the adoptive home. Our goal must be to allow the dog the time to adjust and set him or her up for a forever home with less of a chance of returning to the shelter, or another foster home.

Two-week Shut Down Process

Step back for a minute and think how you might feel if you were never going to go back to your "home" and that you were expected to live with new people who didn't understand your language. What if these new people took you to all sorts of different places expecting you to greet everyone happily and feel comfortable with an overload of attention all at one time?

How might you feel after all of that, to have to go to your new "home" and interact with a

bunch of strangers? It's very likely that you'd feel exhausted, overwhelmed, and ready to retreat, but really have no place to go to. You might begin to act out and yell at people for coddling you and insisting that you do this and do that.

Well, many dogs are put in the very same position and the only way they know how to get their point across is to act out or "misbehave." The dog may act out by nipping at children, growling when being moved off furniture, starting fights with the other animals in the home, etc.

Let's go ahead and preface this by saying that "two weeks" is a general guideline of the amount of time you should follow this program. Some dogs will settle in faster, some will take longer. It all depends on the individual dog and their needs. **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR DOG.** They will "tell" you when they've had enough.

During the initial two week period, the dog is taking in the new environment, the people in it, and is learning who the "leaders" are in the new group, be it animal or human. Remember the dog has **NO** idea **WHO** you are. Pushing the dog to accept new things too fast makes you (who should be the leader) look like you have no control over situations. This makes the dog feel that **THEY** have to make decisions for themselves and you **DON'T** want that. Dogs who feel the need to make decisions for themselves are the ones who "act out" or "misbehave." It is your responsibility to the dog and as a foster parent to make sure the dog looks to you for direction and guidance. Putting the dog in new situations with a person they don't yet know to trust fully is setting the dog up for "failure."

In providing the dog two weeks to "shut down," you are allowing the dog time to see and hear you and the sounds and routines of your home.

- **Crate the dog in a room by itself. Dogs are sensory animals and pick up on a lot without having to visually SEE it.**
- **Leash the dog at all times when not crated. Yes, this means leash the dog to you in the house (this helps a lot with bonding too) and out in the yard (use of a long line is A-OK here). The dog needs to start learning that YOU are its everything.**
- **Letting the dog have full freedom of your home and yard is just telling him to do whatever he pleases and right now, he doesn't have that right because it's YOUR house. You need to remember that so he learns to respect it.**
- **Do little to no training at all. Interactions with the new dog at this point should be positive so as to strengthen the bond. This is another GREAT reason to have the dog leashed to you at all times because, how can they get into trouble if they are right there with someone *ALL* the time.**
- **No walks, car rides, pet store excursions, other animals (unless crated next to them) etc. Obviously, trips to the vet are excluded from this. The dog can live for two weeks without going on a walk. Walks provide an overabundance of stimuli and are VERY stressful, especially when the dog still has no reason to trust you.**

- **Allow the dog 20-30 minute intervals of time in and out of the crate, AFTER exercise/yard times.** For instance, take the dog out for 20-30 minutes, and then crate the dog for about 20-30 minutes. The dog is not crated for an excessive amount of time and still gets to learn you and the house hold. As time progresses, the intervals can be increased as the dog relaxes to help the dog adjust to a more accurate routine.
- **Ignore crying and/or barking.** If you run to the dog each time they bark, whine, or cry, you are teaching the dog that doing those things gets your attention. The dog must learn to be secure when you are not there.
- **Refrain from introducing the dog to resident pets.** You don't want the dog to bond to another dog without bonding to you first! Crating the dogs side by side will help them get used to one another but **GREATLY** limit any interactions for the first two weeks. As the dog begins to relax more and look to you more for direction, introduce the dogs/pets slowly. Our recommendation is to keep the initial introductions **VERY** short. 10-15 minutes at a time. Keep all pets leashed and supervise **ALL** the time. Increase the time by small amounts daily.

You will notice a **HUGE** difference in your new dog within these two weeks! You will see a smile start to come out. You will see more goofy quirks come out.

You'll also begin to get a glimpse of behaviors you will want to correct with training. But, you will have a healthy start in training your dog because you've given the dog a chance to get to know you and trust in your guidance and direction!

The main point to remember: **SLOW DOWN!** Don't push your new dog to accept many different things and give the dog the opportunity to get to know you.

Supplies you'll need

Bama Bully Rescue will provide you with many of the supplies that you will need for your foster dog – supplies such as ID tag, medications and a crate. Foster families are responsible for providing food and treats, but the rescue can loan you much of what is listed below. Here's what you'll need to help your foster dog make a smooth transition to living in your home:

- **At least one bowl for dry food and one bowl for water:** Stainless steel or ceramic work best. Dogs that tend to eat too fast may need a “slow-down” bowl to keep tummy troubles at a minimum. A heavy muffin tin, with the food distributed throughout the cups, can replace a slow-down bowl.
- **High-quality, dry dog food appropriate for the dog's age and weight:** Dogs should be fed at least one time per day, preferably at about the same time each day. Avoid giving table scraps, but fruits and vegetables can be added to the dog's diet over



time. If you need a list of safe fruits and vegetables, ask your foster coordinator to provide you with one.

- **A collar and a leash:** Even though foster dogs are microchipped, they need to wear the Bama Bully provided ID tag on their collars at all times. If your dog pulls on the leash, Bama Bully will provide you with a “Freedom Harness” that will help you train the dog not to pull.
- **Soft bedding** to place inside the Bama Bully provided crate, if your foster dog is past the chewing stage: Old blankets and towels work well for this purpose.
- **A baby gate:** This comes in handy to keep certain areas of your home off-limits.
- **Dog treats:** Giving treats is a good way to help train and build a positive relationship with your foster dog.
- **Dog toys:** Make sure the toys are durable and appropriate for the size of your foster dog. Some toys may be provided. We highly recommend chew toys such as Kongs, antlers, Nylabones, etc. Please do not give rescue dogs rawhides, as they are unsafe.
- **Bathing supplies:** A clean, sweet-smelling dog has a better chance of getting adopted.

Dog-proofing your home

Foster dogs come from a shelter environment, and even if they have previously lived in a home, we don't always know how they will react in a new home. So, before bringing home a new foster dog, you'll want to survey the area where you are going to keep your foster dog. Remove anything that would be unsafe or undesirable for the dog to chew on, and latch securely any



cupboards and doors that the foster dog could get into. People food and chemicals can be very harmful if consumed by dogs, so please store them in a place that the foster dog cannot access.

Never underestimate your foster dog's abilities. Here are some additional tips for dog-proofing your home:

- Make sure that all trash cans are covered or latched or keep them inside a closet. (Don't forget the bathroom trash bins.)
- Keep the toilet lids closed.
- Keep both people and pet food out of reach and off of all counter tops.
- Move house plants or secure them. Some dogs like to play with them and may knock them over or even eat them.
- Make sure aquariums or cages that house small animals, like hamsters or fish, are securely out of reach of your foster dog.
- Remove medications, lotions or cosmetics from any accessible surfaces.

- Move and secure all electrical and phone wires out of reach. Dogs may chew on or get tangled in them.
- Pick up any clothing items that have buttons or strings, which can be harmful to your foster dog if consumed.
- Relocate knickknacks or valuables that your foster dog could knock down.

Section 3: Bringing home your foster dog

Taking care of a foster dog requires a commitment from you to make sure the dog is happy and healthy. Thank you so much for opening your heart and your home to these dogs that desperately need your help. Without you, we could not save as many as we do.

Choosing a foster dog

The foster coordinator will work with you to select a foster dog that meets your specific requirements. We will always do our best to match you with a dog that fits with your lifestyle and schedule.

When you and the foster coordinator have decided on a foster dog, an appointment will be scheduled so you can pick up the dog and any supplies that you will need. The appointment will typically be at the veterinary clinic where the dog is located.

If his or her schedule permits, the foster coordinator will meet you at the clinic and introduce you to the dog. Together, you and the foster coordinator will decide if the dog is the right fit for you. Be honest: If you aren't comfortable with anything about the animal you may be fostering, please tell the foster coordinator before you take the animal home.

Please note: Once the animal is placed in a foster home, the dog cannot be returned to the clinic if the person fostering the dog decides it's not working out. And Bama Bully Rescue does not have a place to house dogs overnight. If you feel you can no longer foster a dog, a new foster home must be found.

Dog introductions

If you have personal pets that are dogs, you'll want to introduce them to your foster dog one at a time after the shut-down period, and supervise their interactions at first. It's a good idea to introduce them outside in a large yard or on a walk, keeping all the dogs on leash and allowing them enough space to get adjusted to one another.



In addition, make sure that high-value items (food, chew toys, plush toys, Kongs, or anything else that your dogs hold in high regard) are put away whenever the dogs are interacting. You don't want to allow the possibility of a fight. Those high-value items are best placed in the dogs' personal areas. Never feed your dogs in the same room as the foster dog; always separate them at feeding time.

Finally, never leave your foster dog unsupervised with any dogs in your home. Foster dogs should always be crated when you are away from home, or too busy to supervise interactions with your own pets or other foster dogs.

Cat introductions

Most foster dogs have been "cat-tested," but if you have personal pets that are cats, you'll still need to make the introduction to the foster dog carefully and safely. Start by keeping your foster dog on a leash at all dog/cat meeting for the first week or two after shut-down. Exchanging blankets or towels between the dog's area and the cats' area will help them get used to each other's smells.

If you have more than one cat, introduce one cat at a time. Do not allow the foster dog to charge or run directly up to the cat. Try to distract the dog as best you can so that the cat has the chance to approach without fear. Watch the body language of each animal closely and don't continue the interaction if either pet becomes over-stimulated or aggressive. The idea is to keep the interactions positive, safe and controlled.

Finally, never leave your foster dog unsupervised with any cats in your home. Foster dogs should always be crated when you are away from home, or too busy to supervise interactions with your own pets.

Children and dogs

Since we don't always know a foster dog's history or tolerance level for different types of people and activities, please teach your children how to act responsibly and respectfully around your foster dog. We will do our best to place you with an appropriate animal for your home situation, but you should still supervise all interactions between children and your foster dog. **Never leave your child unattended with any dog.** Key things to remind your children:



- Always leave the foster dog alone when he/she is eating, chewing or sleeping. Some dogs may nip or bite if bothered while eating or startled while sleeping.
- Do not take away a toy or prized possession from the foster dog.

- Do not tease the foster dog.
- Do not chase the foster dog around the house or run quickly around the foster dog; it may scare him.
- Pick up all your toys. Some dogs may not be able to tell the difference between what is theirs and what belongs to the kids.
- Do not allow young children to walk the foster dog because they may not be strong enough or experienced enough to handle encounters with other dogs or cats that cross their path.
- Do not sit, climb on, pinch, poke, pull, or otherwise mishandle the dogs.

Section 4: Daily care

Feeding

All foster dogs should be fed a diet of dry dog food, unless otherwise specified by the foster coordinator. We recommend using grain-free dog food or other high quality food. Feed your foster dog once or twice daily; the amount will be based on the age and weight of your foster dog. Make sure the dog always has access to fresh, clean water.

You can give your foster dog treats of any kind (unless he/she has known allergies, of course); giving treats helps you and your foster dog to bond with each other. Most dogs like to chew on things, so try Greenies, antlers, Nylabones or Dentabones. Keep in mind, though, that not all dogs like to share, so only give these treats when your foster dog is confined to his/her own area.

Daily routine

When you first take your foster dog home, take care not to overwhelm her with too many new experiences all at once. Sometimes, too much stimulation can cause a dog to behave unexpectedly toward a person or animal, which is why it's a good idea to follow the two-week shut-down protocol closely. It's also important to establish a daily routine of regularly scheduled feedings, potty breaks and walk times. Dogs take comfort in having a routine they can count on.

Also, on a daily basis, be aware of your foster dog's appetite and energy level. If she's not eating well or seems listless, something may be wrong medically. You might want to record your observations to make it easier to notice any health issues.

House-training

It's unlikely that your foster dog will be perfectly house-trained when you take him or her home. Some of the dogs in the foster program have lived in a shelter for a while, often with

minimal walks or chances to relieve themselves outside. At the very least, be prepared for an adjustment period until your foster dog gets used to your schedule.

Because a dog has a better chance of being adopted if she is house-trained, please help your foster dog to perfect this skill. Take your foster dog outside to go potty multiple times per day (3-6 times daily, depending on age). Use the same phrase every time to help them understand what is expected. Initially, you may need to take her out more frequently to remind her where the door to the outside is and to reassure her that you will take her out for potty breaks. Most dogs will give cues — such as standing near the door or sniffing the ground and walking in small circles — to indicate that they need to go out. Keep the dog in a crate when you are not available to supervise her indoors. Keeping a consistent schedule when possible will help the dog to learn this skill. If the dog is difficult to potty train, hanging bells on the door that leads outside may help. The dog may use them as a way to signal that she needs to go outside.



If your foster dog has an accident inside the house, don't discipline or punish her. It will only teach her to fear and mistrust you. Clean up all accidents with an enzymatic cleaner. Nature's Miracle and Simple Solution are two products containing natural enzymes that tackle tough stains and odors and remove them permanently.

Crate training

Crate training, done in a positive way, can be an effective component of house-training. A crate can be a safe place for your foster dog to have "down time" and can also limit his access to the entire house until he knows the rules. A crate should never be used as a form of punishment and a dog should never be left in a crate for an extended period of time.

You can prevent problems with crate training by setting your foster dog up for success. He should only associate good things with the crate, so start by putting treats and/or toys in the crate and encouraging him to go in. Some dogs warm up to the crate slowly. If he is afraid to go in, place a treat in the crate as far as he is willing to go. After he takes the treat, place another treat a little farther back in the crate. Keep going until he is eating treats at the very back, then feed him his next meal in the crate with the door open, so that he can walk in and out at will.

Crate training a fearful dog can take days, so be patient and encouraging. If a crate is properly introduced and used, your foster dog will happily enter and settle down.

Grooming

A clean and well-groomed dog has a better chance of getting adopted, so bathe your foster dog as needed, and trim nails if you feel comfortable. But please be careful because you can cause pain and bleeding if you trim the nails too short. Contact the foster coordinator if you feel that your foster dog needs to see a professional groomer for ear cleaning and nail trimming.

Mental stimulation and exercise

Depending on your foster dog's age and energy level, he or she should get at least two 30-minute play sessions or walks with you per day. Try a variety of toys (balls, squeaky toys, rope toys, etc.) to see which ones your foster dog prefers. Remember to discourage the dog from playing with your hands, since mouthing won't be a desirable behavior to adopters.

You can also offer your foster dog a food-dispensing toy for mental stimulation. You hide treats in the toy and the dog has to figure out how to get the treats out. Try a TreatStik (treatstik.com), Busy Dog Ball (busydogball.com) or Kong product (kongcompany.com), available online and at pet supply stores.

Safety requirements

Foster dogs must live indoors, not outside. Please do not leave your foster dog outside unsupervised, even if you have a fenced yard. We ask that you supervise your foster dog when he is outside at all times to ensure that he doesn't escape or have any negative interactions with other people or animals. Your foster dog is only allowed to be off-leash in an enclosed backyard that is completely fenced in.



When walking or hiking with your foster dog, please keep her on leash at all times. This means that your foster dog is not allowed to go to off-leash dog parks or other off-leash dog areas. We do not know how your foster dog will act in these situations, or how other dogs will react, and we need to ensure that all animals are safe at all times. In addition, we don't know if the other dogs they encounter are vaccinated appropriately or carry diseases, so it is best if your foster dog does not meet any unknown dogs. Having recently come from a shelter setting, foster dogs can be vulnerable health-wise.

Also, your foster dog cannot ride in the bed of an open pickup truck. When you're transporting foster dogs, please keep them inside the vehicle.

Section 5: Helping your foster dog get adopted

When is my foster dog ready to go to the Bama Bully Rescue pet adoption events?

During two-week shutdown, you will assess your foster dog's personality, and let the foster coordinator know if you become aware of personality traits, such as general fearfulness or aggression toward certain dogs, that would prevent the dog from attending adoption events. If healthy enough, any foster dog that has been spayed or neutered and microchipped can attend adoption events. If your foster is a puppy, and not fully vaccinated, please ask the foster coordinator before bringing it to events, and do not put very young puppies on the ground in a public place.

How often do I bring my foster dog to pet adoption events?

To help your foster dog find a home, we ask that you bring him or her to adoption events as often as possible. Always have your dog securely leashed or harnessed at all events, and if you plan to stay for an extended period, ask if a crate will be available for "down time", if your foster dog becomes tired or overexcited.

How does the Bama Bully Rescue adoption process work?

Potential adopters are asked to complete an online adoption application at <http://bamabully.org/our-bullies/adoptables>. Families are very thoroughly screened, and volunteers perform vet reference checks and home checks. Adoption fees are required to help defray medical expenses, and also to ensure that families are committed to their new pet, and value the new addition to their family. If your foster dog gets adopted, either the foster coordinator or the adoption coordinator will call, text or send you an email, whichever you prefer. Once your foster dog has been adopted, please contact the foster coordinator to let him/her know you are ready to pick up another foster dog.



How can I help my foster dog find a great home?

As you get to know your foster dog, we ask that you stay in constant contact with the foster coordinator so that he/she can update the foster animal's biography online to reflect accurate information about the dog's preferences and quirks. Some people write their own biography for their foster dogs, which we encourage, though they may be edited. We also welcome any quality photos and videos that you take of your foster dog in your home; we can use the photos to create an album and accompany the online biography. Dogs with good quality photos are more likely to get adopted quickly. Please add info about your foster dog with photos and video to the BBR Foster and Adopter Facebook page.

In addition, we have adorable "Adopt Me" bandanas that can increase the chances of your foster dog finding a home. Simply tie the bandana around your dog's neck before a walk, and everyone who sees him will know he's looking for a home. Please keep in mind that anyone who shows interest in adopting your foster dog will need to go through the adoption screening process and speak with our adoption coordinator before arranging a meet and greet.

What if I know someone who's interested in adopting my foster dog?

If someone you know is interested in adopting the dog, please contact the foster coordinator and give her the details. Also, tell the prospective adopter to start the adoption process by filling out an adoption application on our website (direct link is <http://fs10.formsite.com/bamabullyrescue/form884759186/index.html>) as soon as possible.

Once the dog is up for adoption, we cannot hold him/her for anyone, but we do want to accommodate referrals from foster parents if we can.

Will it be hard to say goodbye to my foster dog?

Saying goodbye can be the most difficult part of fostering, but keep in mind that many more dogs in Alabama shelters need wonderful foster homes like yours. Remember, you are playing a crucial role in helping to create bully breed ambassadors.



Instructions for adopter “meet and greet” days

If your foster has a potential adopter, the last step before adoption is a “meet and greet”, where the adoptive family (including fur siblings) can check each other out. It is very likely that the adoptive family will make a decision, and will take your foster home with them that day.



Arranging a meet and greet. The adoption coordinator will let you know when a family has finalized the adoption screening process, and has been approved to adopt. He/she will provide you with the e-mail address and phone number of the adoptive family, and will ask that you arrange a mutually agreeable time and place. A BBR board member will also try to be available to help with the introductions, and will need to be made aware of the agreed upon time and place. We recommend that you choose a time for the meet and greet when all members of the adoptive family can be available. We also recommend that you choose “neutral territory” for the

meeting place, which should prevent any territorial behavior by the foster or the adoptive family’s dogs. Remind the adoptive family to bring a collar and leash with them to the meet and greet.

What to bring. Please bring about three days’ worth of your foster’s dry dog food in a clear plastic bag. Label the bag with the foster dog’s name and the brand and flavor of food to let the adopter know what type of food the dog has been eating. The adopter may wish to switch the food, but having a small amount of the dog’s current food will help with transitioning to a new food.

If your foster animal is on any daily medication, please bring that as well so that the animal can go home with it and the adopter has a few days to move records to a new veterinarian. You will also want to provide the foster with a list of preventive medications that your foster dog has been taking, and the date to administer the next dose. Also list the BBR partner veterinarian that your foster has been seeing, and provide copies of medical vaccination certificates, record of spay/neuter, microchip information, and other important documentation. The foster tag provided when you received your foster should go with the dog to his/her new home.

Most adopters want to know the current routine that the foster dog has been following in order to make the transition to the new home as smooth as possible. Take a little time to write out details, including:

- Feeding times
- Potty times
- Favorite toys and chews
- Exercise preferences
- Tricks and commands already learned
- Bedding preferences
- Personality quirks

Section 6: Medical and emergency protocols

Criteria for emergencies

If your dog is in crisis, the foster coordinator needs to be notified of the need for emergency care as soon as possible. He/she will help you decide where to take the dog for treatment. If it is not possible to contact the foster coordinator before visiting an emergency veterinary clinic, be sure to make contact with a BBR board member before committing to any course of treatment.

Medications

If you are fostering a dog who is on medications, please make sure that he/she gets all prescribed doses. Do not end medication early for any reason. If your foster animal has not responded to prescribed medications after five days (or in the time instructed by a veterinarian), please contact the foster coordinator.

Veterinary care

Bama Bully Rescue provides all medical care for our foster animals at our approved veterinary clinics. Because we are ultimately responsible for your foster dog's well-being, our board members must authorize any and all treatment for foster dogs at our approved veterinary partners.

If your foster dog needs to go to the veterinarian, please notify the foster coordinator by text or phone. The foster coordinator will schedule the appointment. For non-emergency situations, please understand that our veterinary partners book quickly and

EMERGENCIES!

What constitutes a medical emergency in a dog? A good rule of thumb is any situation in which you would call 911 for a person. Here are some specific symptoms that could indicate an emergency:

- Not breathing or labored breathing
- Symptoms of parvovirus: bloody diarrhea, vomiting, weakness, high fever (above 103.5 degrees)
- Signs of extreme dehydration: dry mucous membranes, weakness, vomiting, tenting of the skin (when the skin is pulled up, it stays there)
- Abnormal lethargy or unable to stand
- Unconsciousness or unable to wake up
- Cold to the touch
- Broken bones
- Any trauma: hit by a car, dropped, stepped on
- A large wound or profuse bleeding that doesn't stop when pressure is applied
- Loss of appetite for more than 24 hours

If your foster dog displays any of these symptoms, please call the foster coordinator immediately.

may not be available for same-day appointments. We ask that you request basic non-emergency appointments (drop-off, pick-up, vaccines and supply pick-ups) at least 24 hours in advance.



Remember, foster parents will be responsible for payment of any medical care if they take their foster animal to a veterinarian without authorization from the foster or adoption coordinator. Please note: If you wish to take your foster pet to a veterinarian who's not on the Bama Bully Rescue list, you must first have approval from the foster coordinator or risk having to cover the costs yourself.

Signs of illness and what to do next

Dogs generally do a good job of masking when they don't feel well, so determining if your foster dog is under the weather will require diligent observation of the dog's daily activity and appetite levels. It's a good idea to keep track of these levels in a journal. You'll also want to record any of the following symptoms, which could be signs of illness.

Coughing and nasal discharge. Coughing can be common if your foster dog is pulling on leash. If the coughing becomes more frequent, however, watch for discharge coming from the nose. If the discharge is clear, the infection is probably viral and medication may not be needed, but check with the foster coordinator to find out if a vet appointment is necessary.

Dehydration. Dehydration is usually associated with diarrhea, vomiting and/or loss of appetite. To test for dehydration, gently pinch the dog's skin around the scruff area. If the skin stays taut, the dog is dehydrated. Please call the foster coordinator the next business day to schedule a vet appointment.

Diarrhea. It is important to monitor your foster dog's pooping habits daily. Soft stool is normal for the first two or three days after taking a dog home, most likely caused by stress and a change in food. If your foster dog has liquid stool, however, please contact the foster department so that an appointment can be scheduled to ensure that the dog doesn't need medications. Keep in mind that diarrhea will dehydrate the dog, so be proactive about contacting the foster coordinator. If your foster dog has bloody or mucoid diarrhea, please contact the foster coordinator.

Eye discharge. It is normal for dogs to have some discharge from their eyes when they wake up and some may have more than others, depending on the breed. But if your foster dog has yellow or green discharge, or swelling around the eyes (making it hard for him to open his

eyes), or the third eyelid is showing, you need to contact the foster coordinator to schedule a vet appointment.

Frequent ear scratching. Your foster dog may have a bacterial or yeast infection (or, in rare cases, ear mites) if she scratches her ears often and/or shakes her head frequently. These conditions can be treated by a veterinarian, so please call the foster coordinator to schedule a medical appointment.

Hair loss. Please contact the foster coordinator if you notice any hair loss on your foster dog. It is normal for dogs to have thin fur around the lips, eyelids and in front of the ears, but clumpy patches of hair loss or thinning hair can indicate ringworm, dermatitis or the early stages of mange. It is important to check your foster dog's coat every day.

If the discharge becomes colored, ask the foster coordinator to make a vet appointment because the dog may have a bacterial infection. Be sure to monitor the dog's breathing. If the dog seems to struggle to breathe or starts wheezing, call the foster coordinator immediately. Also, once you notice nasal discharge, monitor the dog's eating habits more closely to ensure that he or she is still eating.

Lethargy. The activity level of your foster dog will vary depending on age and personality. Keeping an activity log and journal will help you notice whether your foster dog is less active than he normally is. If the dog cannot be roused or seems weak and unable to stand, it's an emergency, so call the foster coordinator immediately.

Loss of appetite. Your foster dog may be stressed after arriving in your home, and stress can cause lack of appetite. But if the dog hasn't eaten after 24 hours, please notify the foster coordinator. Also, if the dog has been eating well, but then stops eating for more than 24 hours, call the foster coordinator to set up a vet appointment. If you believe that a change in diet will help restore the dog's appetite, be sure to transition to the new food over a few days to a week. An abrupt change in diet can cause diarrhea, which can lead to dehydration.

Pain or strain while urinating. When a dog first goes into a foster home, he or she may not urinate due to stress. If the dog hasn't urinated in more than 24 hours, however, please contact the foster coordinator. Also, if you notice the dog straining to urinate with little or no results, or crying out when urinating, please contact the foster coordinator immediately because it may be indicative of an infection or an obstruction.

Swollen, irritated ears. If your foster dog has irritated, swollen or red or pink ears that smell like yeast, he may have an ear infection called otitis. This type of infection is more common in dogs who have very floppy ears. These dogs may need to have their ears cleaned more often to ensure that the infection does not re-occur.

Vomiting. Sometimes dogs will eat too quickly and will immediately throw up their food. Occasional vomiting isn't cause for alarm, but if your foster dog has thrown up two or more times in one day, please notify the foster coordinator. It could be indicative of infection.

Common ailments in animals from shelters

Shelter dogs may suffer from kennel cough, giardia or intestinal parasites. Symptoms of kennel cough include a dry hacking cough, often with phlegm discharge, discharge from the nose and/or eyes, decrease in appetite, dehydration and slight lethargy. Symptoms of giardia or intestinal parasites include vomiting, diarrhea (often with a pungent odor) and/or dehydration.

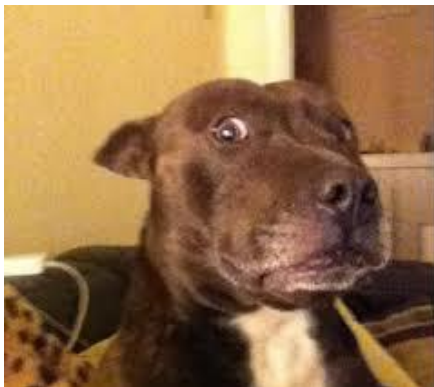
If your foster dog is displaying one or more of these signs, please contact the foster coordinator. These ailments can worsen if left untreated.

Section 7: Behavior support

One of your goals as a foster parent is to help prepare your foster dog for living successfully in a home. So, we ask that you help your foster dog to develop good habits and skills through the use of positive reinforcement training, which builds a bond of trust between you and your foster pet. The basic idea is to reward desirable behaviors and ignore unwanted behaviors.

You must not punish a dog for a behavior that you find undesirable because punishment is ineffective at eliminating the behavior. If the dog is doing something undesirable, distract him or her before the behavior occurs. It is also important for every human in the foster home to stick to the rules established for your foster dogs, which will help them to learn faster.

When interacting with your foster dog, refrain from wrestling or engaging in play that encourages the dog to be mouthy and "play bite" on your body. Do not allow your foster dog to sleep in your bed with you at night. Some adopters may not find this habit acceptable, and your foster dog may have trouble becoming accustomed to being crated at night if you haven't helped him/her to become comfortable with that routine.



Some foster dogs will have behavioral issues, which we may or may not be aware of at the time of their rescue. Some of these behavior challenges are separation anxiety, destruction of property, fear issues or aggression toward other animals. When possible, we will make an effort to place dogs with behavioral issues only with a person who feels comfortable working with the dog on his/her particular issues. However, some dogs may not exhibit behavioral issues until they have been placed in a home. We will provide fosters with all the necessary information so that

proper care and training can be given to the foster dog.

If you feel unable to manage any behavior that your foster dog is exhibiting, please contact the foster coordinator during business hours to discuss the issue. We will guide you and help in every way that we can. If the behavior is extreme enough to warrant use of a trainer, we will provide one for you. Please understand that we have limited resources, so for basic training and minor behavior problems, we will personally work with the dog.

Thank you so much for opening up your heart and your home to foster pets.





Acknowledgement of Receipt

Please click the link below to complete your foster care contract online. Thanks!

[BBR Foster Care Contract](#)